It's a Wonderful Life for Everyone Else

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It's a Wonderful Life for Everyone Else

by toggledog

Summary

Post Fall, Hannibal is secure in his relationship with Will Graham.
A stray thought, as he drifts off to sleep, has his mind play out what everyone else's lives would be like, had he (Hannibal) never existed.

Notes

Can be seen as part of my "Post Fall" series but also works as a stand alone.
Note that Will is only with Beverly in the alternate "what if?" universe.

The sweaty, muscular legs hooked around Hannibal's waist, compelling him further against Will's warm body.

"I've got you," Will said, mouth upcurling into a cheeky smile.

"Indeed, you have," Hannibal flicked a stray curl off his forehead, before pressing their lips together, their tongues engaged in a ferocious battle, as hands stroked, pinched and slapped flesh, in movements reminiscent of their lovemaking the minute before.

They pulled apart, Hannibal cupping Will's chin in his palm, allowing a lazy grin to uplift his lips. A voyeur to their intimacy would correctly identify the cannibal's expression to be one of extreme love sickness. Hannibal, who had experienced no other relationship of the depth of his and Will's to compare to, relished the intense pleasure permeating his system; the sight, feel, touch, taste and sound of his beloved a feast for his overwhelmed senses.

"We should sleep," Will said, his chest heaving up and down. Hannibal continued to stroke his inner thighs, before moving the fingers to his mouth, to lick the collected come that had seeped down from Will's well used opening.

"Should we?" Hannibal grinned.

Will responded by kissing the stubble of Hannibal's neck, sparking thrills of ecstasy throughout his frame.

"Yes, we should. My first client is coming over at nine tomorrow and it's…" Will glanced at the alarm clock. "Damn it's two o'clock in the morning!"

"Yes, terrible to have spent the night starting with a marvelous dinner, then research for the hunt followed by an extended lovemaking session."

"Lovemaking…" Will rolled onto his side and Hannibal rotated with him, elongating up against his back and wrapping an arm around his chest. "The *serial killer* refers to our intimacy as love making."

"What would you, *fellow serial killer*, refer to it as? We are in love are we not?"

"I'm not sure if you tying me face down onto the bed before roughly penetrating me could be classified as 'lovemaking'," Will said, with a wry tone.

"Mm… I do love you, Will…" Hannibal pressed his lips against his sweaty right shoulder. "Frantically, impossibly. You are my soul's half I never considered I needed."

Will gripped Hannibal's hand and held it to his chest.

"We make an… interesting couple, don't we?" Will said. "Murder husbands. Freddy Lounds was, of course, onto us pretty much from the beginning."

“I would argue *I* was onto us from the beginning, stripping away your layers, by force as necessary at times, painful as it was, to reveal your truth,” as Hannibal spoke, Will rolled back to face him.

“The truth that I ultimately fell in love with a serial killer? That I now divide my time between walking and washing other people’s pets and stalking, hunting and ultimately murdering with my erstwhile partner? And it all started with Dolarhyde. Crazy son of a bitch that he was. Maybe I’ll sent a bunch of flowers to his grave.”

“I tried to warn you to stay away, if you recall, to not go back to work for Jack Crawford.”

A rueful grin uplifted the full lips. “You and I both knew that was never going to happen. I managed to… forget you, for three years…but then, seeing you again… all of that… complicated emotion came rushing back…”

“You truly forgot about me?” Will was able to force out of Hannibal emotions he did not even consider possible, in conceit of his acknowledged psychopathy. This stabbing slicing down his chest was as familiar as the feeling which occured when Will had betrayed him with his decision to not run away with him, causing him to slice Will physically.

“Hannibal…” The pads of Will’s fingers were feather light on his cheeks. “You had tried to cut my skull open, after gutting me, framing me for murder, oh yes and killing the one I regarded as a daughter. At the time, I was more than happy to forget about you, as close as we were.”

“I never forgot about you,” Hannibal admitted. “Not for one day. I was, certainly, not permitted any information in regards to your endeavours, but I managed to find bits of information here and there… When you walked back into my life,” Hannibal’s own fingers drifted into his murder partner’s tangled hair strands. “You were exactly as I remembered. Beautiful, with a seeming docility, but I understood the viciousness lurking beneath the surface. You simply needed a push to fully explore your dark nature.”

Will glanced down to where their fingers intertwined, forehead furrowing.

“Your dark desires are sated by the viciousness of our violence together, yes,” Hannibal said. “But there is more for you, than me. I don’t care for moral quandaries, *can’t* care. But to quench that thirst, the ones who we murder…”

Will’s blue irises met Hannibal’s brown.

“Vengeance is not as frowned upon as society would have us believe,” Hannibal continued. “Ask any of the victim’s families of our own victims if they are pleased, that they suffered as their victims did. With all talk of forgiveness and rehabilitation, there is a hunger for vengeance, especially here in the United States.”

“If you’re talking about capital punishment-“ Will said, with distinct scorn.

“No, I don’t believe in an arbitrary system which unequally punishes the poor and unprivileged. However, it remains to be said, we thirst for vengeance, we have a need to

punish those who have broken the social contract. As we should." Hannibal's voice lowered. "Your continuing guilt over the murders you commit with me remain a part of the fabric of who you are."

"Maybe… but you're still right…" Will said, clenching their hands tighter. "A man, like our latest dearly departed William Jones, who murders children, in the most despicable…he deserved what we did to him. But, I still feel guilt… maybe it's right to feel guilt, but also be convinced of the righteousness of our cause." He smiled, shook his head. "Despite all of my misgivings, all of my insecurities, I know I can be frustrating at times, but I do love you, Hannibal. We are both as one."

"What would our lives be, if we never met each other?" Hannibal mused.

"Very boring, I'd say," Will said, kissing the back of Hannibal's knuckles. "At least from my side."

Hannibal indulged in his mouth once more. As they pulled apart, he moved onto his back, allowing Will to nestle his head on his shoulder, his hand lightly stroking his stomach.

If we never met each other…

Hannibal allowed the tendrils of sleep to ensnare around him, pulling him deeper into a relaxed state.

Never met… if I had never been born… peculiar notion…

"Yes, if you had never been born…"

Hannibal opened his eyelids, to a familiar visage before him.

"Surprise!" Chilton's flesh was pink and unblemished, his lips full and unmutilated, facial features likewise lacking in mutilation.

"Interesting dream," Hannibal said, recognising the muted tones and elegant furniture of his former psychiatrist office.

"This is *my* office; is it pleasing to you?" Chilton asked.

Hannibal allowed a more detailed glance around the room, now noticing peculiarities that contrasted with his own personal style; the papers strewn in an untidy fashion all over the desk, with half a dozen pages fallen to the ground, the haphazard stacking of the bookcases, the ugly rosa colour of the chairs they were sitting on.

"Of course, we always had such similar styles in terms of aesthetics," Chilton said.

"Ah… so this is my brain attempting to reconstruct what everyone's life would be if I weren't in it?"

"No, this is what everyone's life would be if you were never *born*, Hannibal. I never became the head psych at the Baltimore State Hospital for the Criminally Insane and thus never

encountered you… or Will Graham. Was never mutilated, never burned alive. My professional integrity remains intact as a leading psychiatrist."

Hannibal noted the various framed photos of Chilton and glittering recommendations displayed throughout the room and grinned.

"Your arrogance remains unchecked."

"Don't give yourself that much credit," Chilton said, with a low voice.

"So, if you aren't head psychiatrist then the head psychiatrist would be…?"

The scene changed, as occurs in dreams, Hannibal drifting seamlessly to another office, smaller, but at least tidier. Alana stood on one side of the desk with her arms folded, and Freddy Lounds stood on the other, mirroring her body language. Both visually appeared the same, at least, even down to the same hairstyles and clothing of when they were in Hannibal's acquaintance.

"I can't allow you to see Dolarhyde. I would suggest you leave," Alana said. "Hannibal, I suggest you do too. I have no more desire to see you than I ever did, particularly now you never even existed to begin with."

"Maybe…but then you helped my web traffic rise by twenty percent…" Freddy addressed Hannibal. "By the way, the Tooth Fairy? Will Graham solved it. Of course he did. Had him arrested without incident. No one was mutilated or burned or thrown off a cliff."

"Where is he? Where's Will?" Hannibal demanded.

"Wouldn't you rather see Francis Dolarhyde?" Freddy asked. "I know I would. He's far more interesting than boring Will Graham… yes, Hannibal, without you he's just a dull family man… with an interesting occasional side line in helping the FBI."

Molly.

The woman was determined to return even in Hannibal's dreams; the one who Will had attempted to have a normal life with, who had taken Will away from his becoming.

A brief knock sounded at the door and Margot walked in.

"Sorry I didn't realise…"

"It's fine…" Alana said after giving Margot a brief kiss on the lips. "These two are leaving."

"So, you and Margot are still a couple, even without my interference?" Hannibal asked, with a bemused tone.

"Not everything is about you, Hannibal," Margot said. "My brother's… nefarious actions brought in the attention of the FBI… with Will Graham and Jack Crawford came Alana."

“Did you still kill him with his own electric eel?” Hannibal asked. The crinkling of Alana and Margot’s brows informed him in the negative.

“If you must know he took his own life, after he was arrested.”

Hannibal noticed a peculiarity to this world without him. There was a lack of colour, of interest, none of the peculiar quirks that to him made life interesting.

“I need to see Will.”

The scene changed once more, to Will, standing in front of the curled up body of a child. Hannibal looked around and recognised the woodland area. Three of the victims of William Jones had been dumped in this very spot.

“That makes twelve,” a voice whispered behind him. *Jimmy.* “We’ve got to get this bastard.”

Twelve? The Sacramento Slasher, as Freddy Lounds had labelled him, had evidentially killed two more in the lack of Hannibal.

“Look at this,” Beverly Katz’s voice drew Hannibal down, to where she was kneeling by side of the victim. “Looks like he fought his attacker. Appears to be skin under his fingernails.”

“What have you got?” Jack Crawford asked Will.

Will loudly exhaled. “Not much.”

Hannibal blinked. *Not much?* With him Will refined his game, was able to make links not even he, in all of his brilliance, could make.

“Give me more time,” Will said, crouching beside the body.

“Alright, everyone clear out,” Jack said.

All did as he ordered, walking under the yellow crime scene tape, but for Hannibal, who knelt beside Will. His murder partner was back to wearing dime store clothes. Though, to Hannibal, his beauty was of such significance the shoddy lining and ill fits did little to diminish his aesthetics, he still encouraged Will to dress in more refined outfits. Will often succumbed, Hannibal suspected out of respect for him over any true style.

“In this universe, your beauty remains untarnished,” Hannibal said, resisting the urge to drag the pad of his thumb along the bristles of his beloved’s jawline.

‘Yes, oddly my forehead isn’t scarred from someone attempting to cut open my brain,” Will said “Or shove a knife in my cheek.”

“Do you know who did this?” Hannibal asked, gesturing to the corpse.

“He was deposited here from somewhere else…” Will’s said. “The yellow fibers found on the other victims, I would suggest came from a carpet or a rug. This one is disorganised, doesn’t care-“

“Will, are you happy in this life, without me?”

Will’s eyebrows drew inwards, as he considered the question.

“As much as I can be.”

“Do you have your dogs? A river? What about Abigail?”

“Who’s Abigail?” Will asked.

“Abigail Hobbs,” Hannibal said. “She was the daughter of Jacob Hobbs.”

“Ah yes… that was… unfortunate. The jury sentenced her alongside the father. At least she didn’t get the death penalty.”

“So, they both survived? You didn’t shoot Jacob Hobbs?”

“Why would I do that?” Will asked, finally turning to look at Hannibal. “No, he was taken in, without incident. It wasn’t until after that we made the connection to Abigail as well.”

Hannibal stood, his stomach muscles twisting around each other. No relationship whatsoever with Abigail. His mind again went back to this universe as one with no colour, no texture for Will or the others.

“Show me your house,” he asked.

The scene changed again, to them standing in front of Will’s abode. The house was simple enough; of a French style, with the requisite narrow windows, steeply pitched roof and half-timber frame. As soon as Will entered the front door to the sparsely furnished interior, a trio of dogs came barking up and skittling along the varnished wooden floorboards towards him.

“Hello, hello…’ Well this was at least the same. Will continued to pant and hug and kiss the dogs as though they were his own children.

“Okay, after such a rough day at work, I accept no excuses, we are going out to dinner,” the woman’s voice sounded.

Hannibal gaped, as Beverly came up to Will, grinned and pecked him on his lips.

“You. And *Beverly Katz*?”

“And why not?” Beverly turned to face him, with her hands on her hips. “When you did exist I had…a thing for Will.”

“That was obvious, but I saw no feelings from Will’s side,” Hannibal said.

“That’s because he had no time to develop any! You killed off the competition,” Beverly countered.

“You were about to discover me-“

“For a psychiatrist you are surprisingly easy to read. You killed me as a way to bring Will closer to you. And also killing off the competition.”

“And what about you, Will?” Hannibal asked. “Am I right in that you didn’t have feelings for Beverly to begin with?”

“Well, if you’ll recall, I had a *thing*, as you say, for Alana,” Will took his glasses and fiddled with them in his hands, a cute move he always made in times of stress.

“Thanks, Hannibal, thanks a lot…” Beverly rolled her eyes and knelt down to pat the dogs, as though needing comfort.

“Alana made it clear she wasn’t interested and I started to notice…” Will grinned, knelt, and gripped the small of Beverly’s back. “I started to notice how damned cute Beverly was.” He kissed her nose. “and smart.” He kissed her forehead. “And funny.”

“I get to choose the restaurant tonight,” Beverly said, standing.

“So, you’re happy without me?” Hannibal said.

Will glanced at him and shrugged.

Hannibal opened his eyes, the lines and curves of the shapes of the room taking a moment to familiarise themselves. He was back in his own bed. Frowning, he reached across and switched on the bedside light. Will lay silent beside him.

“Will…” He shook his partner’s shoulder.

Will didn’t move.

“Will…” he said louder.

“Hannibal… need to sleep…” Will’s drowsy voice sounded.

“Will I had the most extraordinary dream.”

“Mm…”

“Will!” He shook him again.

“Can’t it wait until morning?”

“In my dream, I played out what it would be like if I never existed. Alana was now head of the Baltimore State Hospital for the Criminally Insane. Chilton had my office. You were working for Jack Crawford still but you were now in a romantic relationship with Beverly Katz.”

Will sat up.

“With *Beverly*? Hannibal,” he shook his head.

“Everyone was fulfilled but their lives lacked a certain texture. You had your dogs and your lake and you were clearly in love with Beverly Katz.”

Will’s lips downturned.

“Hannibal, I was never interested in Beverly. Don’t get me wrong, she was a great person.”

“Perhaps not to begin with. However, given time…”

Will’s lips downturned further, his brows now dangerously pinioned down.

“Damn you, Hannibal! I always thought you killed Beverly because she had discovered you! But now I realise you also were taking out what you saw as the competition-“

“That’s exactly what Beverly said in my dream.”

“Which is so absurdly possessive and creepy. I wasn’t even *interested* in Beverly and you still killed her on the pretext I may develop feelings at some point in the future! I *liked* Beverly! Damn you, Hannibal, your obsession with me is so wrong, just so wrong,” he thumped his fist against the mattress.

“But it’s an obsession you clearly want. After all, you’re still here now. If it’s any consolation, I liked Beverly too.”

Will flopped down, rolling to face away from him.

“You know I don’t have the capacity to experience remorse for my actions, Will. Not as you can. As I’ve already told you, I acknowledge her death as a blessing, a way to bring us closer…”

Will sat up and reached across the bed for his dressing gown, pulling it on.

“There is only one person with whom I have ever experienced love or longing, emotions I can’t even put words to. Some negative. Some positive. And that’s you, Will.”

Will froze but still wouldn’t turn.

“We go around in circles, Hannibal,” Will said, in a low tone.

“We do. That’s us.”

“No, it’s *me*,” Will finally turned to face him. “I don’t doubt your… love for me, twisted as it is. It’s just… this talk about Beverly has brought up painful memories.”

Hannibal pulled him forward, enfolding his arms around his back and exhaling in relief as Will’s own arms went around his shoulders, his head against his chest.

“I don’t wish to pain you,” Hannibal said. “That was not my intent.”

“But you have. Over and over again. Beverly. Abigail.”

“In my dream you had no relationship whatsoever with Abigail. Her father was arrested without incident, followed by her.”

Will was silent a long moment.

“Even as messed up as it was you murdering her, I still appreciate the time we had. No, I wouldn’t want a life where I didn’t have any relationship with Abigail. She was with me, all over Europe. Her ghost. I didn’t want to accept her death.” His voice shook on the last three words. “With Beverly, I was so intent on getting revenge, I didn’t mourn until after I was released from prison. I didn’t know her that well but still…I mourned her death.”

He lapsed into silence once more. Hannibal pulled his arm tighter around him, burying his nose in his hair, to relish in the sweet scent of his shampoo.

Will pulled back, indescribably beautiful to Hannibal in that moment, despite the shine of tears in his eyes, the redness of his cheeks.

“Make love to me. Slow, no handcuffs, no roughness. Please.”

And so Hannibal did, kissing and stroking his flesh and inside him until he gave breathless gasps for more. When he slid into his well slicked opening, Will’s moan was of the perfect pitch, the stubble of his chin tickling Hannibal’s lips in the most sensual way. They moved together, slow, fluid motions up and down, tongues clashing, hands trailing through hair, down backs, over sharp hipbones and the curves of muscles. Will came first, arcing up, his dark eyelashes a smudge on his cheeks, his mouth open in a loud groan. Hannibal thrust three more times and flung back his own head, crying out as the intense pleasure pulsated through his enraptured being, as he emptied himself into his lover again and again. Still shaking with the tremors of the come down, he collapsed on his Will, nuzzling his cheek, as he gingerly pulled out of him.

“Heavy, Hannibal,” Will grinned.

Hannibal moved off him, still needing to touch, to slide a hand across his stomach.

*

A loud knocking shook the last whisper of sleep from Hannibal’s consciousness.

“Damn, he’s early!” Will jumped out of bed, and picked up his discarded clothes from where they’d been thrown pre-lovemaking onto the floor, and shoving them on. Hannibal sat up, grinning. His own first client with his newly acquired private psychiatric clinic wasn’t coming for at least another hour. “I don’t even have time for a shower. I smell like sex.”

Will cast a rueful smile in Hannibal’s direction, before climbing onto the bed and kissing him.

“I’ll give you guys one thing. You make a hot couple,” Beverly’s voice sounded in Hannibal head.

“Hardly! Will Graham can do so much better,” Chilton’s voice now accompanied Beverly’s.

Will waved at Hannibal and departed the room.

“You mean like *you*?” Hannibal said out loud, mind for the first time since his flee with Will pondering what had become of the psychiatrist who wasn’t too clever in hiding his infatuation for Will Graham.

Poor pretty Will. Not even noticing Chilton’s mislaid affections.

“I would never breach that line… unlike you,” Chilton’s voice again sounded.

“All the better for me.”

The ghosts of Chilton and Beverly departed his mind, never to return again.

*

Hannibal allowed his final client, a mousy woman with seven children, out the door as Will came through on the other side.

“Sorry!” He said, stepping back to allow her through.

“I’ll see you next week,” Hannibal said, as the woman glanced at Will and hurried to her vehicle.

Will closed the door and stepped up to Hannibal.

“Hello handsome,” Will said, drawing him forward into a long and lingering smooch. “Tonight, no excuses. We are going out to dinner. I’ve already booked us a table at La Manche.”

An echo briefly floated through Hannibal’s mind, of Beverly’s voice, before dissipating.

“Sounds great my love.”

“We go out and then we hunt.”

Hannibal returned to the dream, to Will standing before the deceased child.

“In my dream, there were twelve victims of William Jones and you weren’t close to catching him.”

“If you were never born, more would die. Makes sense in a twisted kind of way,” Will said. “That makes me even more glad you’re here, that I’m with you right now.” He planted a wet kiss on Hannibal’s nose. “What if I were never born?”

“My life would be without colour, without spark. I would live a dreary existence, from one grey day to the next.”

“Hm… you really love me that much?”

“I do.”

*

“Hannibal… Hannibal…”

“Mmm…” Hannibal nuzzled his beloved’s shoulder.

“I had a dream last night in which I never existed. More people die if I never existed. A lot more. Also, a lot of cases weren’t solved…Jacob Hobbs… Dolarhyde…You were sent to prison… after you stabbed Jack Crawford to death.”

“Makes sense it would be either him or me,” Hannibal admitted, entangling his naked legs with Will’s.

“You were more vicious with your murders, torturing them first… it was hideous, horrific…” A shudder spasmed Will’s smaller frame. “I looked into your eyes and I saw… nothing… no emotion at all. It was like looking into a blank mirror.”

“What do you see now?” Hannibal asked, switching on the light and turning back to Will. “What have you brought out in me?”

Will’s pupils flicked back and forth, in intense study.

“It’s good I was born. It’s good we were *both* born.”

Hannibal laughed, kissed his forehead.

“More of the hunt tomorrow, my love. I promise.”

“We’re pretty sick and twisted, aren’t we?” Will grinned. “Looking forward to it, my love.”

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